

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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BURNING DRIFT-WOOD.

Before my drift-wood fire I sit,
And see, with every waif I burn,
Old dreams and fancies coloring it,
And folly's unlaidd ghosts return.

O ships of mine whose swift keels cleft
The enchanted sea on which they sailed,
Are these poor fragments only left
Of vain desires and hopes that failed?...

Alas! the gallant ships, that sailed
On blind Adventure's errand sent,
Howe'er they laid their courses, failed
To reach the haven of content.

And of my ventures, those alone
Which Love had freighted, safely sped,
Seeking a good beyond my own,
By clear-eyed Duty piloted. . . .

Take with you, on your Sea of Dreams,
The fair, fond fancies dear to youth.
I turn from all that only seems,
And seek the sober grounds of truth.

What matter that it is not May,
That birds have flown, and trees are bare,
That darker grows the shortening day,
And colder blows the wintry air!

The wrecks of passion and desire,
The castles I no more rebuild,
May fitly feed my drift-wood fire,
And warm the hands that age has chilled

Whatever perished with my ships,
I only know the best remains;
A song of praise is on my lips
For losses, which are now my gains.

Heap high my hearth! No worth is lost;
No wisdom with the folly dies;
Burn on, poor shreds, your holocaust
Shall be my evening sacrifice!

Far more than all I dared to dream,
Unsought, before my door, I see;
On wings of fire and steeds of steam
The world's great wonders come to me,

And holier signs, unmarked before,
Of Love to seek and Power to save,—
The righting of the wronged and poor,
The man evolving from the slave;

And life, no longer chance or fate,
Safe in the gracious Fatherhood.
I fold o'er-wearied hands and wait,
In full assurance of the good.

And well the waiting time must be,
Though brief or long its granted days,
If Faith and Hope and Charity
Sit by my evening hearth-fire's blaze.

And with them, friends whom heaven has
spared,
Whose love my heart has comforted,
And, sharing all my joys, has shared
My tender memories of the dead,—

Dear souls who left us lonely here,
Bound on their last, long voyage, to whom
We, day by day, are drawing near,
Where every bark has sailing room.

I know the solemn monotone
Of waters calling unto me;
I know from whence the airs are blown
That whisper the Eternal Sea.

As low my fires of drift-wood burn,
I hear the sea's deep sound increase,
And, fair in sunset light discern
Its mirage-lifted Isles of Peace.

—*John Greenleaf Whittier.*

THANKSGIVING.

Animal spirits, there is no doubt of it, have much to do with cheerfulness and contentment. Many of us can be gay and satisfied under circumstances which would sorely try our less elastically constituted neighbors. To one, the duty is generally so easy as to demand no moral exertion whatever. To another, it is the very culmination of his highest efforts. But, small or great the difficulty, on all of us it lies. If we have natural cheerfulness, we must keep it equable, when our spirits (as they do in every one) fluctuate from want of excitement or over-excitement. If our spirit come not naturally from our bodily state, then it must come from something far higher, from the resolute, virtuous will at one with God and loving all that God appoints.

Secondly, we should show gratitude by actually expressing our thanks in the words which would spontaneously issue from our lips were our hearts truly kindled. Our acts of worship would often include recitals of the benefits received, and at every moment of enjoyment, where formal worship was impossible, we should send up to God the *thought* of gratitude.

I believe that few things would more completely modify our lives than such *habitual thanksgiving*. Suppose that instead of confining our "grace" to one meal in the day, we were each to say in our own hearts a little grace after each successive occupation. The business of the field or the office, honestly and punctually performed to the best of our abilities; a kind act which we have been permitted to accomplish, whether with or without self-denial; a study which we have pursued to the enlargement of our minds; a conversation which has aided our own or another's good thoughts, or warmed our kindly sympathies with friendly intercourse; a walk or ride in the fresh air, invigorating brain and limbs,—are not all these worth a "grace" as well as the best of good dinners? And, if we were thus to accustom ourselves to thank God for the *innocent* pleasures of life, how sharp a line would it force us to draw between them and the *guilty* ones, for which we could not dare to bless him. After spending hours of idleness when labor was due; after self-indulgence when we might have benefited our brother; after reading bad books; quarrelling, slanderous, or unclean talk; meals, at which we sunk our souls in gluttony and excess,—could we offer thanks after these things to Him whose gifts we had polluted? Surely, not the most impious among us all. Thanks-

giving, then, would divide, as with chemical test, the evil pleasures from the good. And it would hallow and endear these good ones beyond our conception. To a loving heart even the merest trifle becomes precious when accepted as a token of care for our welfare, and so every blessing of mortal life may be taken as proving the tender mercy of Him whom we may reverence and love beyond the noblest and nearest of earthly friends. These feelings come to us all at times. There are days (perhaps most commonly when the heart is softened by penitence), blessed days, when we trace everything to God's hand, and are ready to weep, in very tenderness, for the primrose which has blossomed in our favorite nook, or the caresses of the poor dog which his Maker and ours has taught to sympathize so wonderfully with our joy and sorrow. Oh that we could keep forever fresh such feelings as these! It is not *they* which are false and exaggerated. It is our ordinary coldness which is a mockery of the great reality of God's goodness and man's obligations.

Nor is it only for ourselves and our own blessings that we ought to give thanks to God. I have already said that we should bless Him for the beautiful and beneficent order of his creation, and it is not merely inasmuch as this benefits *us* that we ought to do it. Surely a good given to our brother is a source of gratitude. Surely the happiness of the myriad millions of our fellow-creatures, rational and irrational, in the past and in the future is a subject for thanksgiving. We have spoken often of the abstract wrong there would be were crime to remain forever unpunished. Does it not seem there would be also a wrong if this whole lovely planet should roll on for age after age around the life-giving sun, followed by the sweet, holy moon, enjoying all the beneficent alternations of summer and winter and day and night, freshening its great oceans with the tides and covering its shores with the gorgeous robe of vegetable life, giving birth and sustenance to all the joyous tribes of insect and fish and bird and brute, and yet that from this happy sphere no incense of thanks shall ever ascend into the heavens to bless the Lord of all for the order of His beautiful universe?

A thousand centuries ago, when God looked down upon this third planet of the solar system, in this galaxy of suns, there was (as we think) no living soul who trod its surface, endowed with the power to apprehend its bounteous intent or to return Him an expression of gratitude. The mighty Ichthyosaurus, wallowing in those turbid

waters, the fearful Pterodactyl spreading his bat-wings in the heated air, the giant Megatherium trampling through the forests of primeval pines,—what knew they of the Maker who built their monster forms, and planted their luxuriant woods, and sent the light of His sun to their large, horny eyes, and made His rain to grave its traces on that red sandstone of the olden world, even as to-day He sends it on the cultured fields of the rational sons of men? And now, when, perchance, many hundred thousand years have passed away, since the far-off epochs of the Saurian and the giant Sloth, when God looks down now on our garden-globe, how many does He see, upon all its smiling surface, offering up the dumb world's thanks to Him, its kind and careful Lord? It is but a few, even now, who can thus be spokesmen of the silent earth. The brutes and birds and fishes of our time are as insensible of religion as the monster creatures of old; the ass and the ox, to-day know the crib and the fold as the mammoth and the hyena knew the ancient caverns where their petrified bones have lain all these millenniums; but no steps of advance can we yet trace in their knowledge of Him to whose infinite heart their hungry cries have never appealed in vain, "who openeth His hand, and fulfilleth the desire of every living thing." Man's sacred race alone may yet produce aspirants for the solemn priesthood of our world; and, of that great family, how few are the happy sons who can stand forth in that high office! Take away the child in years and the child in knowledge; take away the savage whose creed has not yet reached even the polytheist's power to thank, under many names, the one Giver of all good,—take away all these, and how few remain who can look up to God with that tear-brimming eye which must ever turn to Him after any wide survey of His bounteous world.

Surely, then, it becomes well every soul among us which is capable of it to take on itself this blessed work, to leave not wholly and forever unthanked God's goodness to those who *cannot* thank Him, but to put aside for awhile the thought of our own present and everlasting joy, and to turn to bless *our* benefactor for being also the kind and tender parent of all our countless fellow-creatures. Let us thank God for ourselves, but let us also thank Him for others. Let us thank Him for His good providence toward all the tribes of men, now living or departed, for His care of them on earth, for His love for them when gathered in by death still closer to His infinite bosom. Let us

thank God that there are millions who share all our joys, and that there are millions who have joys which we shall never share. Let the blind and deaf and crippled thank God for the seeing and the hearing and the healthy limbs of their brothers. Let the hungry praise God that others have food; the bereaved, that others have the joys of affection; the orphans, that others have parents; the childless, that others have children.

And what if we should go a step beyond our own race, and bless God sometimes for the brutes,—bless Him, not only that He has made so many of them useful to *us*, but that He has made them all for *their own* happiness. It we could embrace in one view all the innocent delights of all the dwellers in earth and sea and air, what mountainous worlds of bliss would seem piled up before us. The shoals of the merry fish swimming in the blue waters those same endless dances which the insects fly in the summer air, and the little rabbits and mice running along upon the ground; the stately beasts browsing or ruminating gently over earth's broad pastures from the Tartar's grassy plains to the measureless savannahs of the West; the birds singing at their work, as they build their nests in the love that knits their little, fluttering hearts, whether beating beneath the splendid plumes of the tropic tribes or clothed in the "russet livery" of those humble sparrows, whose fall Christ knew that God would mark,—what oceans of joy are here! The elements absolutely swarm with beings whose delight is visible to our eyes every day; and, if we turn to count the tiny beings which dwell unperceived around us down to the infusoria, of which two drops of water hold a population larger than the whole human race, by what arithmetic shall we estimate the gifts of life and joy rained down from the Infinite Love of Heaven?

Surely, surely, it would be right that we should sometimes lift our soul to God in thanksgiving for all His endless care and goodness toward the creatures whom he has not disdained to make happy, though they can never bless Him for their happiness.—*Frances Power Cobbe.*

Let the minister ask himself, "If I were a layman, would I be satisfied to hear such preaching as I preach?"

How superior is the man of forbearance and gentleness to every other man! He is the real conqueror, the conqueror of himself. *Dewey.*

THE STILL HOUR.

And a new song is in my mouth
To long-loved music set.
Glory to Thee for all the grace
I have not tasted yet.

—A. L. Waring.

There is a greater cause for our gratitude to God than the pleasures of this palace-world He has built for our present abode. Beyond it lies boundless, everlasting life. We are not made for this happiness alone, great as it is. It is but an accident of the road, a *mere* world of joys thrown into the great design. What we are made for, what we shall reach at last, is a height of being, a virtue including such love, such joy, that, could we see it now, our dazzled sight would never more perceive either the pleasures or the trials which belong to mortal life. God throws our immortality into the background of our consciousness, probably because, were we clearly to behold it, there could be no salutary punishment, no strengthening trial, in our earthly lot. We should feel such things no more than we heed the little pebbles which lie under our feet when we spring forward into the arms of a long-parted friend. But, though our immortality cannot now be realized by our feeble brains, it is still *there*, it is waiting for us. In the eye of Him to whom the future is as the present, we are even now the blessed creatures we shall be hereafter, pure and good and strong beyond our highest aspirations. Love of God and of the myriads of our brothers will swell with rapture the vast expanse of our hearts, while our minds will grow in knowledge, God-like and illimitable, as we rove from world to world throughout the clusters of the suns, doing indeed at last "the will of our Father, even as it is done in heaven," and growing ever more "perfect, even as He is perfect."

Is this hope, this faith in the great end and meaning of our existence, no cause for thankfulness? Have we no gratitude to God that he has not made us, like the grass, to spring up for an hour in the morning sunlight, and to be cut down at even, dried up and withered forever? Some time or other we shall learn what it is to have been created an IMMORTAL, RATIONAL, FREE AGENT.—
Frances Power Cobbe, in "Religious Duty."

Thine own no heavenly burden spare!
Withhold no task divine;
And let our eager love declare
The unbought grace of Thine!

—T. H. Gill.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.]

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "Shall I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed here.

OFFERS.

"Black Beauty" is offered by Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

For the following books address Miss M. A. Vinal, 20 Lowell Street, Cambridge, Mass.: "Sparrow, the Tramp"; "J. Cole"; "A Dog-day"; "King Arthur's Knights"; "The Common Birds of New England"; "The Tale of Benjamin Bunny"; "The Second Book of Birds"; "Anne of Green Gables"; "Stories of Great Americans for Little Americans"; "Laid up in Lavender," Weyman; "A Motor Flight through France"; "Peter," F. Hopkinson Smith; "Historic Towns of New England"; "Shakespeare's Plays (in one vol.)"; "The Tar Baby and Other Rhymes of Uncle Remus"; Wordsworth's "Poems"; "Margaret Maitland"; "Lucy Crofton," Mrs. Oliphant; "El Fureidis"; "Beulah"; "Zenobia," Aurelian, William Ware; "Mrs. Tree's Will"; "Lord of Himself"; "Hope Leslie"; "Franklin's Autobiography and Essays"; "Common People."

REQUESTS.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

1. Miss D. A. H. Parsons, Ottawa, Kansas, R. R. 2., is particularly anxious for Tennyson's Poems, "Tales from Shakespeare," "Swiss Family Robinson," and anything about Roosevelt, for use in her school. She would also be glad to receive a Life of Christ.

2. Rev. M. N. Royal, Cottage Grove, Alabama, will be very grateful for any of the following books: Coulter's "Botany"; "History of Education," Seeley; "Zoölogy," Jordan; "General History," Meyers; "International Law," Woolsey; "Sociology," Giddings or Wright; "Interlinear Memorabilia," Xenophon.

3. It has been some time since I have applied to the Book Club, so I come asking you for a good commercial arithmetic, a book on elementary chemistry, a general history of the world. I am expecting to teach school

in the near future, and would be glad to receive any good books. My health has been very bad, but I am much better now and do hope I shall be able to better prepare myself. Ross Bryan, Whitakers, North Carolina, R. F. D. 1, Box 17.

4. It has been a long time since I have made a request for reading; but, as the long evenings draw near and as our family is now very small, I have more time for reading and would be glad if some one would send me the *Ladies' Home Journal*, also any reading matter, books or magazines. My father has been confined to the house for nearly two years. Mother and I have to stay with him, as it requires both to lift him from his bed to his chair. My only brother, aged twenty, works in the public works and would be very glad of suitable reading, too. If some one would send me a red-letter Testament, I certainly would appreciate the kindness. I would also, if it is not asking too much, like to be remembered by some of the friends with cards and letters, thanking all the dear friends for their past kindness. Yours very truly, Gertrude E. Pedigo, Vinton, Virginia.

5. Reading, post-cards, and letters will be most welcome to Mrs. A. C. Hottinger, Hebron, Ohio. She has been a sufferer and a shut-in for many years.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

CHARLES KINGSLEY IN HIS HOME.

"Cheerfulness or joyfulness," said Jean Paul, in his "Levana; or, the Doctrine of Education," "is the heaven under which everything but poison thrives. All newborn creatures require warmth, and what then is warmth to the human chicken but happiness? One has but to give them play-room by taking away what may be painful, and their powers shoot up of themselves. The joyousness of children! Should they have anything else? I can endure a melancholy man, but not a melancholy child."

With this atmosphere of joyousness the parents tried to surround the children at the rectory, and that not only as a means of present enjoyment, but as a tonic to strengthen the young creatures to meet the inevitable trials of the future. We must pause a moment in the midst of the father's work and letters. We have seen him in his church and parish, and must now see him in his home, where his children had the best of everything,—the sunniest and largest rooms indoors. And because the rectory was on low ground,—the churchyard six feet above the

living rooms, and the ground sloping upwards, on three sides,—he built them a hut for an outdoor nursery, on the "Mount," where they kept books, toys, and tea-things, spending long, happy days on the highest and loveliest point of moorland on the glebe, a real bit of primæval forest. And there he would join them, when his parish work was done, bringing them some fresh treasure picked up in his walk, a choice wild-flower or fern or rare beetle, sometimes a lizard or a field-mouse; ever waking up their sense of wonder, calling out their powers of observation, and teaching them lessons out of God's great green book without their knowing they were learning.

And then the Sundays, the hardest day of the week to him, were bright to the children, who began the day with decking the graves in the dear church-yard, an example which the poor people learned to follow, so that before the morning service it looked like a flower-garden; and, when his day's work was done, however weary he might be, there was always the Sunday walk, a stroll on the moor, and some fresh object of natural beauty pointed out at every step. Indoors the Sunday picture books were brought out. Each child had its own, and chose its subject for the father to draw, either some Bible story or bird, beast, or flower mentioned in Scripture. Happy Sundays! never associated with gloom or restrictions, but with God's works, as well as his word, and with sermons that never wearied.

Punishment was a word little known in his house. Corporal punishment was never allowed. His own childish experience of the sense of degradation and unhealthy fear it produced, of the antagonism it called out between a child and its parents, a pupil and its teachers, gave him a horror of it. It had other evils, too, he considered, besides degrading both parties concerned. "More than half the lying of children," he said, "is, I believe, the result of fear, and the fear of punishment." On these grounds he made it a rule (from which he never departed) not to take a child, suspected of a fault, at unawares, by sudden question or hasty accusation, the stronger thus taking an unfair advantage of the weaker and defenceless creature, who, in the mere confusion of the moment, might be tempted to deny or equivocate. "Do we not pray daily 'Lord, confound me not,' and shall we dare to confound our own children by sudden accusation, suspicious anger, making them give evidence against themselves, when we don't allow a criminal to do that in a court of law? The finer the nature, the more easily it is

confounded, whether it be of child, dog, or horse. It breaks all confidence between parent and child." "Do not train a child," he said to a friend, "as men train a horse, by letting anger and punishment be the *first* announcement of his having sinned. If you do, you induce two bad habits: first, the boy regards his parent with a kind of blind dread as a being who may be offended by action which to *him* are innocent, and whose wrath he expects to fall upon him in his most pure and unselfish happiness. Alas for such a childhood! Next, and worse still, the boy learns to fear not sin, but the *punishment* of it, and thus he learns to lie. At every first fault and offence, too, teach him the principles which make it sinful,—illustrate it by a familiar parable,—and then, if he sins again, it will be with his eyes open." He was careful, too, not to confuse or "confound" his children by a multiplicity of small rules. Certain broad, distinct laws of conduct were laid down. "It is difficult enough to keep the Ten Commandments," he would say, "without making an eleventh in every direction." This, combined with his equable rule, gave them a sense of utter confidence and perfect freedom with him. They knew what they were about and where to find him, for he had no "moods" with them, and, if they had, he could be pitiful and patient. Like a brave man as he was, he kept his feelings of depression and those dark hours of wrestling with doubt and disappointment and anxiety which must come to every thinking, feeling human being, within the sanctuary of his own heart, unveiled only to one on earth and to his Father in heaven. And, when he came out of his study and met his children and guests at breakfast, he would greet them with bright courtesy, and that cheerful, disengaged temper acquired by strict discipline, which enabled him to enter into all their interests and the joy and playfulness of the moment. The family gatherings were the brightest hours in the day lit up, as they were, with his marvellous humor. "I wonder," he would say, "if there is so much laughing in any other home in England as in ours." He became a light-hearted boy once more in the presence of his children, and still more remarkably so in that of his aged mother, when he saw her face clouded with depression, during her later years, which were spent under his roof. He brought sunshine into her room whenever he entered it, as well as the strong, spiritual consolation which she needed and received in his daily ministrations by her bedside morning and evening.

The griefs of children were to him most piteous. "A child over a broken toy is a sight I cannot bear," and, when nursery griefs and broken toys were taken to the study, he was never too busy to mend the toy and dry the tears. He held, with Jean Paul Richter, that children have their "days and hours of rain,"—days when "the child's quicksilver" falls rapidly before the storms and cold weather of circumstances, and parents "should not consider or take much notice either for anxiety or sermons," lightly passing over these variations of temperature except where there are symptoms of coming illness. And here his knowledge of physiology, and that delicate organization of brain, which had given him a sad experience in his own childhood, made him keen to watch and detect such symptoms. Weariness at lessons and sudden fits of temper or obstinacy he detected as often springing from physical causes, and not to be treated hastily as moral, far less spiritual delinquencies, being merely, perhaps, phases of depression, which pass over with change of occupation, air, and scene, and the temporary cessation of all brain work. Justice and mercy, and that rigid self-control which kept him from speaking a hasty word or harboring a mean suspicion, combined with a divine tenderness, were his governing principles in all his home relationships.

It has been said of Sir William Napier's expression of countenance, in words that perfectly describe Charles Kingsley, "This tenderness was never so marked as when he was looking at or talking to little children." At such times the expression which came over his face was wonderfully beautiful and touching. Towards these little creatures he had an eager way of stretching out his hands as if to touch them, but with a hesitation arising from the evident dread of handling them too roughly. The same sort of feeling, too, he manifested in a minor degree towards some small animals, little dogs, kittens, and birds.

He respected as well as loved his children, from the early days when "Heaven lay about them in their infancy," and he hung with reverent and yet passionate wonder over the baby in its cradle, to grown-up years when he looked upon them as friends and equals. Home was to them so real a thing that it seemed in a way as if it must be eternal. And, when his eldest son in America, heard of his father's death, and of another which seemed imminent, and foresaw the break-up of the home, he stood as one astonished, only to say, in the bitterness of his soul: "I feel as if a huge ship had broken up

piece by piece, plank by plank, and we children were left clinging to one strong spar alone. . . . Ah, how many shoals and quicksands of life he piloted me through by his wonderful love, knowledge, and endurance,—that great Father of ours, the dust of whose shoes we are not worthy to kiss.”—*Life of Charles Kingsley*.

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE INTELLIGENCE OF A BIRD.

“Adequately to treat of the intelligence of birds, a separate volume would be required.”—*Romanes*.

“It is scarcely too much to say that he who refuses to credit the lower animals with intelligence raises anxiety on the score of his own.”—*Brehm*.

“In our . . . inability to grasp and analyze sympathetically that psychic force which we call instinct, what remains for us but to judge discreetly and proportionally the mental processes of our little brothers . . . by the rules which order our decisions upon the operations of the human mind.”—*Henry C. McCook, D.D., Sc.D., LL.D., in Harper's Monthly, May, 1907*.

“We must always bear in mind that there is still much to learn about the lives of even those birds with which we are most familiar.” *Dr. George Harley, in Selborne Society Papers*.

To the intelligence of birds there is ample testimony. In fact, in approaching the subject, one is almost embarrassed by the mass of evidence which has been pouring in since men began to look upon the feathered world as something more than food for the gun, a check upon the ravages of insects, or subjects for scientific investigation.

“The evidences that the lower animals are endowed with intellectual faculties are too many and too obvious to require argument,” says a modern bird-student, and adds, “No definition of the moral faculties of man can be formed that will not include the faculties in the lower animals.”

Dr. George Harley declares, emphatically, in one of the publications of the Selborne Society of London, that “it is, I believe, true that our little feathered friends in many cases think, reason, feel, and act exactly as we ourselves do.”

“Everything one thinks or says, one hour or day,” says Edmund Selous, “is contradicted the next. There is little or no uniformity in the actions of birds. That is my constant experience.”

It is surely a proof of intelligence that birds learn by experience “to take advantage

of changed conditions to better themselves.” Says Prof. Hadley: “To learn wisdom by individual experience is of the very essence of reason.”

The crow, as we all know, has learned much of the ways of mankind. Hawks have discovered that a passing engine scares up their prey, and that, while one man is dangerous, a whole trainful is harmless. So hawks in some places habitually accompany a train, one of a pair flying on each side of the engine, and pouncing upon every creature that is thus disturbed.

The same is true of another bird, as testified to by an English observer: “On the railroad embankment you will see shrikes sitting in pairs, at stated intervals, watching for prey. Trains do not frighten them. They seem to understand that the rumble and shake of the ground gives them food. The vibration . . . causes the insects to dart from their shelters and then the shrikes are busy. So well known has it become to all insect-feeding birds that railway tracks are good hunting-grounds that it is now a common sight to see rooks perched on the telegraph posts waiting for a train to pass. The moment it has gone by they dash off to feed. Even that most wary bird, the green woodpecker, will hunt along the line at certain seasons.”

Nor are our American birds less wide awake. Mr. Forbush says that even swallows, who seem to be the least observing of men's doings of any birds, have learned that men walking through the grass start up insects, especially one which destroys immense quantities of meadow-grass, and in one place, at least, habitually follow any one passing through the fields, to pick up the insects, thus scared up.

We are all familiar with the changed habits of the chimney swifts, who long ago abandoned the use of hollow trees for their homes, and resorted to the chimneys of men, and now, it is said, are gradually turning to barns and sheds for their building. *From “The Bird—Our Brother,” by Olive Thorne Miller.*

MACK, THE PARROT.

As man is gifted with capacities for being spiritual, even angelic, so birds have a capacity for becoming more like human beings. Especially is this the case with a caged parrot. In the first place it is now known that the brain of the parrot more nearly resembles the brain of man than does that of any other bird or animal. It has similar convolutions; and this accounts for his ability

to talk and think,—almost to reason. In his rather small home he can hardly fail to become at least slightly introspective. This seemed evident when Mack gave up, lately, his love for crowing like a cockerel, which he had always done to perfection. For months he had refused to give even the fraction of a crow. At last I asked,—

"Mack, why do you never give us a cockerel?" He looked at me seriously, and said,—

"I know better."

That was conclusive, we ask him no more. Still, one day, when very happy over a visit from some of his little girl friends, he burst out with a joyous "Cock-a-doodle-do!" But two crowings had to suffice. We expect no more.

He despises the bad, popular music (?) of the street, and, alas! too often of the home. Coon songs and rag-time melodies are an offence to his ear. If a strain comes through the window, he says, "I don't like that!"

As I have before recorded, he loves the songs of Robert Franz, and will sing two or three notes of the song, "Oh, thank me not," as a hint for Aunt Lu to sing it to him. He listens intently, and, when the song is over, again gives her the cue, keeping in indefinitely. If some one sings or hums an indifferent air, he says,—

"I don't care for it."

Apropos of his crowing, I must tell this: I said to him, by way of experiment, "Come, Mack, give me a cockerel!" His reply was: "I don't want any. What do you want it for?"

"Oh, when Ethel comes, she will want you to give her one; and Aunt Emma will want one, too." In cool indifference he replied:—

"No matter about it. I don't want it."

On a particularly cold, raw day, Mack got up too early for the household. There was no warm corner for him at first, and he seemed quite unhappy, saying, continually, "Mackie's cold." Nothing would do but he must go into the kitchen. In about ten minutes he began to sway his body and dance, and exclaim: "I felt better."

He began then to nibble his seeds, and I forgave him the use of the wrong tense in his verb, glad, for once, that he had made a slip in his grammar.

At another time his wonted correctness forsook him, and he said,—

"I can't forgot."—*Helen M. Knowlton.*

When judging another, remember your own weakest point.

THE SICK IN WORK-HOUSES.

II.

As an example of the kind of way in which every sort of wretchedness drains into a work-house, and of what need there is for some one to watch for it there, I may record how we one day perceived at the far end of a very large ward a figure not at all of the normal work-house stamp,—an unmistakable gentleman, sitting on the side of his bed. With some diffidence we offered him the most recent and least childish of our literature. He accepted the papers graciously, and we learned from the master that the poor man had been found on the Downs a few days before with his throat cut,—happily, not irreparably. He had come from Australia to Europe to dispute some considerable property, and had lost both his lawsuit and the friendship of all his English relatives, and was starving, and totally unable to pay his passage back to his wife and children at the Antipodes. We got up a little subscription, and the good Freemasons, finding him to be a brother, did the rest, and sent him home across the seas, rejoicing, and with his throat mended!

But the cases of the *incurable* poor weighed heavily on us, and, as we studied it more, we came to see how exceedingly piteous is their destiny. We found that it is not an accidental misfortune, but a regular descent down the well-worn channels of Poverty, Disease, and Death, for men and women to go to one or other of the two hundred and seventy hospitals for *curable* patients which then existed in England (there must be many more now), and, after a longer or shorter sojourn, to be pronounced "*incurable*," destined, perhaps, to linger for a year or several years, but to die inevitably from consumption, cancer, or some other of the dreadful maladies which afflict human nature. What, then, becomes of them? Their homes, if they had any before going into the hospital, are almost sure to be too crowded to receive them back, or too poor to supply them with both support and nursing for months of helpfulness. There is no resource for them but the work-house, and there they sink down, hopeless and miserable, the hospital comforts of good beds and furniture and carefully prepared food and skilled nurses all lost, and only the hard work-house bed to lie, and *die* upon. The burst of agony with which many a poor creature has told me, "I am sent here because I am incurable," remains one of the saddest of my memories.

Miss Elliot's keen and practical mind turned over the problem of how this misery

could be in some degree alleviated. There was no use in trying to get sufficient hospitals for incurables opened to meet the want. There were only two at the time in England, and they received (as they do now) a rather different class from those with whom we are concerned; namely, the deformed and permanently diseased. At the lowest rate of £30 a year it would have needed £900,000 a year to house the 30,000 patients whom we should have wished to take from the work-houses. The only possible plan was to improve their condition in the work-houses; and this we fondly hoped might be done (without burdening the rate-payers) by our plan, which was as follows:—

That the incurables in work-houses should be avowedly distinguished from other paupers, and separate wards be allowed to them. That into these wards *private charity* be freely admitted and permitted to introduce, with the sanction of the medical officer, such comforts as would alleviate the sufferings of the inmates; e.g., good spring beds or air beds, easy-chairs, air-cushions, small refreshments, such as good tea and lemons and oranges (often an immense boon to the sick), also snuff, cough lozenges, spectacles, flowers in the window, books and papers, and, above all, kindly visitors.

The plan was approved by a great many experienced men and women; and, as it would not have added a shilling anywhere to the rates, we were very hopeful that it might be generally adopted. Several pamphlets which we wrote, "The Work-house as a Hospital," "Destitute Incurables," and the "Sick in Work-houses," and "Remarks on Incurables," were widely circulated. The newspapers were very kind, and leaders or letters giving us a helping hand were inserted in nearly all, except the *Saturday Review*, which refused even one of its own regular contributors' requests to introduce the subject. I wrote an article called "Work-house Sketches" for *Macmillan's Magazine*, dealing with the whole subject, and begged that it might be inserted gratuitously. The paper appeared; and soon after, to my equal astonishment and delight, came a cheque for £14. It was the first money I had ever earned, and, when I had cashed the cheque, I held the sovereigns in my hand and tossed them with a sense of pride and satisfaction which the gold of the Indies, if gained by inheritance, would not have given me! Naturally I went down straight to St. Peter's and gave the poor old souls such a tea as had not been known before in the memory of the "oldest inhabitant."

About the same time that we began to visit the Bristol work-house, Miss Louisa Twining bravely undertook a systematic reform of the whole system throughout the country. It was an enormous task, but she had great energy and a fund of good sense; and, with the support of Lord Mount-Temple (then Hon. William Cowper Temple), Mrs. Tait, and several other excellent and influential persons, she carried out a grand reformation through the length and breadth of the land.

While our plan for the incurables was still in progress, I was obliged to spend a winter in Italy for my health, and on my way I went over the Hotel Dieu and the Salpêtrière in Paris, and several hospitals in Italy, to learn how best to treat this class of sufferers. I did not gain much. There were no arrangements that I noticed as better or more humane than our own, and in many cases they seemed to be worse. In particular, the proximity of infectious with other cases in the Hotel Dieu was a great evil. I was examining the bed of a poor victim of rheumatism, when, on looking a few feet across the floor, I beheld the most awful case of small-pox which could be conceived. Both in Paris, Florence, and the great San-Spirito Hospital in Rome the nurses, who in those days all were Sisters of Charity, seemed to me very heartless, proud of their tidy cupboards full of lint and bandages, but very indifferent to their patients. Walking a little in advance of one of them in Florence, I came into a ward where a poor woman was lying in a bed behind the door, in the last "agony." A label at the foot of her bed bore the inscription "Olio Santo," showing that her condition had been observed,—yet there was no friendly breast on which the poor creature's head could rest, no hand to wipe the death-sweats from her face. I called hastily to the nun for help, but she replied with great coolness, "Ci vuole del cotone!" and seemed astonished when I used my own handkerchief. In San-Spirito the doctor who conducted me, and who was personally known to me, told me he would rather have our English pauper nurses than the Sisters. This, however, may have been a choice grounded on other reasons' beside humanity to the patients. At the terrible hospital "delgi Incurabili," in the via de 'Greci, Rome, I saw fearful cases of disease (cancer, etc.), receiving so little comfort in the way of diet that the wretched creatures rose all down the wards, literally *screaming* to me for money to buy food, coffee, and so on. I asked the Sister, "Had they no lady visi-

tors?" "Oh, yes! there was the Princess So-and-so and the Countess So-and-so, saintly ladies, who came once a week or once a month." "Then do they not provide the things these poor souls want?" "No, Signora, they don't do that." "Then, in Heaven's name, what do they come to do for them?" It was some moments before I could be made to understand, "Perpetuarle, Signora!" (To comb their hair!) The task was so disgusting that the great ladies came on purpose to perform it as a work of merit; for the good of their *own* souls!

The saddest sight which I ever beheld, however, I think was not in these Italian hospitals, but in the Salpêtrière in Paris. As I was going round the wards with a Sister, I noticed on a bed opposite us a very handsome woman lying with her head a little raised and her marble neck somewhat exposed, while her arms lay rigidly on each side out of the bed-clothes. "What is the matter with that patient?" I asked. Before the nun could tell me that (except in her head) she was completely paralyzed, there came in response to me an unearthly, inarticulate cry like that of an animal in agony, and I understood that the hapless creature was trying to call me. I went and stood over her, and her eyes burnt into mine with the hungry eagerness of a woman famishing for sympathy and comfort in her awful affliction. She was a *living statue*, unable even to speak, much less to move hand or foot, yet still young, not over thirty I should think, and likely to live for years on that bed! The horror of her fate and the piteousness of the appeal in her eyes, and her inarticulate moans and cries, completely broke me down. I poured out all I could think of to say to comfort her, of prayer and patience and eternal hope; and at last was releasing her hand which I had been holding, and on which my tears had been falling fast, when I felt a thrill run down her poor stiffened arm. That was the uttermost effort she could make, striving with all her might to return my pressure.

In recent years I have heard of "scientific experiments" conducted by the late Dr. Charcot and a coterie of medical men, upon the patients of the Salpêtrière. When I have read of these, I have thought of that paralyzed woman with dread lest she might be yet alive to suffer, and with indignation against the science which counts cases like these of uttermost human affliction "interesting" subjects for investigation!

In concluding these observations generally

on the "Sick in Work-houses," I should like to offer to humane visitors one definite result of my own experience. Do not imagine that what will best cheer the poor souls will be *your* conversation, however well designed to entertain or instruct them. That which will really brighten their dreary lives is, to be *made to talk themselves*, and to enjoy the privilege of a good listener. Draw them out about their old homes in "the beautiful country," as they always call it, or in whatever town sheltered them in childhood. Ask about their fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, everything connected with their early lives, and tell them, if possible, any late news about the place and people connected therewith by ever so slight a thread. But before all things make *them* talk, and show yourself interested in what they say.—*Frances Power Cobbe.*

LETTERS OF A SISTER.

BOSTON, Dec. 23, 1840.

My dear James,—Many wise persons think that this is a very good time for you to begin preaching at the Temple to collect a new congregation; and, if such is your wish, I should think there could not be a better time. Mr. K. has been stirring up our people in a most unprecedented manner, and all the ministers are getting roused also. Mr. — preaches a new sermon every Sunday, and Mr. — is beset on all sides by the inquiries of his people who wish to know how to answer the new objections.

As I have written you so much about the community, I will tell you what Mr. Emerson's plan is. He is going not to join the Ripley set, but take to his own house several destitute friends,—Mr. Alcott and family, Christopher — and wife (he who believes in God), George B. (your admirer),—and adopt them all into his family, make his own property a common fund for their support, and all unite in common labor to assist each other. This he has been meditating for some time, and I suppose Mr. Ripley's proposition to him to join *his* community has brought him to a crisis. Mrs. Emerson is of the same mind with her husband and readily consents to his plan. Does it not strike you that this is the beginning of a truly Christian life?

Mr. Ripley tells me you are doing your translation beautifully, which pleases me much.*

George S. thinks that you are the only

* "Theodore; or, The Sceptic's Conversion," by De Wette.

person who can do something good, now in Boston.

Dr. Channing has been desired to hold a familiar meeting in houses, and he is willing, but not desirous of doing so. He desires, he says, to reserve his strength for that object which lies nearest his heart, and he has not yet said all he has to say upon that point: I suppose he referred to abolition. He said that, when you arrived here, he thought you might assemble persons together in that way and either address them or hold a religious conference with them.

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

(Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Mr. Henry A. Jenks, Canton Corner, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address plainly (not necessarily for publication), and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper.)

I.

DISHES FOR THANKSGIVING DINNER.

One is hidden in each sentence.

One day last summer a merry crowd, returning from a mountain tramp, called at a farmhouse for lunch, and the hospitable wife, putting on the teapot at once, soon had a good meal ready. One of the party, a Turk, eyed the repast sadly. He said he could not join us, for he was used to eating only macaroni on such occasions. From seeing him look so comic, I derived a hearty appetite.

Without waiting for my turn I proceeded to help myself. Just then there came a bee trying to sting my next neighbor, Ira Smith, and myself while we were enjoying the delicious strawberries which had been offered us. With a hop I escaped. As to Ira, he, about frantic, ran, berry-saucer in hand, to the piazza. When we were ready to start home, he was nowhere to be found, and we were beginning to worry, when the Turk said: "You can't palm off on me any such chestnuts. Ira is in swimming and will soon overtake us." So upon that we started.—*Youth's Companion.*

II.

HEROES AND HEROINES.

In what books do they figure?

1. The Little Seamstress.
2. John Galbraith.
3. Miss La Creevy.
4. Harry Trelyon.
5. Portia.
6. Harry East.

III.

NUMERICAL PUZZLE.

Famous men.—Each number represents a corresponding letter in the alphabet.

8, 5, 14, 18, 25—9, 18, 22, 9, 14, 7, a famous actor.

19, 20, 5, 16, 8, 5, 14—I—4, 15, 21, 7, 12, 1, 19, a senator.

19, 1, 13, 21, 5, 12—I, 4, 1, 13, 19, a governor of Massachusetts.

23, 9, 12, 12, 9, 1, 13—2, 18, 1, 4, 6, 15, 18, 4, a governor of the Plymouth Colony.

10, 15, 8, 14—4, 1, 22, 9, 19, a senator.

Answer to Puzzles in the October Number.

I. INITIAL LETTER PUZZLE.—Hallowe'en.

II. BEHEADINGS.—1. Trio—rio. 2. Truth—ruth. 3. Town—own. 4. Train—rain. 5. Track—rack.

III. HALF SQUARE.—F E L O N

E B O N

L O T

O N

N

IV. RHOMBOID.—M A R T

T E A M

D R A W

E D E N

V. PI:—

The breaking waves dashed high

On a stern and rock-bound coast,

And the woods, against a stormy sky,

Their giant branches tost.

THE EDITOR'S CORNER.

The Editor thinks that probably a great deal of humane work is done by the members of the Cheerful Letter Exchange in the way of distributing such papers as the *Dumb Animals* and *Our Four-footed Friends*. She thinks, however, that this part of Cheerful Letter work may be capable of farther development, and asks the help of readers of the *Cheerful Letter* to accomplish this object.

Will not every teacher (of a school or of a Sunday-school class) who receives the *Cheerful Letter* send a *written request* to the Book Club, asking for copies of the two papers mentioned, to distribute among her (or his) scholars? It is probable that the response would be a large one.

God is here, around us, moving about our daily life; in us, stirring, speaking, acting in our hearts. What we want is the conviction of a loving Father, in whom we live and move and have our being.—*Stopford A. Brooke.*

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is cordially invited to distribute the copies of the *Cheerful Letter* received among lonely members of his parish, shut-ins or invalids of whom he may know. He is also invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

Givers of books are reminded that only books of an instructive or wholesome nature should be offered in the Book Club. Classics, educational works, and standard novels are always acceptable.

LIBRARY NOTICE.

The Cheerful Letter Exchange offers to start a circulating library in any small community needing one, providing proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references supplied.

Apply to Mrs. Irene C. Rees, 51 Orchard Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Subscriptions to *The Cheerful Letter* should be sent to the secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Make checks payable to Lily Blunt Porter.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

Headquarters of the Cheerful Letter Exchange are at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter, may be found there on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange on Friday, November 5, at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, at 10.30 A.M. All interested are cordially invited to be present.

The Home Study Work of the Cheerful Letter Exchange offers to help those who wish to improve their education. Lessons will be given in all subjects which can be taught by correspondence, such as Arithmetic, Book-keeping, Algebra, all branches of English, History, Botany, Geography, Languages, Drawing, etc.

Requests for these lessons should be sent to Mrs. Annie F. Hudson, 2 Maple Place, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is a rule of the Cheerful Letter Exchange that no one may ask for money, clothing, or other articles, except books and magazines.

The name of any person who fails to obey this rule will be dropped from our list. Any worker receiving such a request should send the letter at once to Headquarters.

The Editor asks POSTMASTERS who send notices of changes of address not to send these notices to the Editor, but to the Secretary, at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Send requests for books and letters of thanks to the Book Club Secretary.

Any subscriber not receiving the paper regularly is requested to notify the Secretary.

Chairman, Miss Helen L. Bayley, 399 Broadway, Cambridge, Mass.

Editor of "The Cheerful Letter," Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

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